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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 3 and 9 in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein.

Please amend claims 1, 4-8, and 11 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A seat belt system for a vehicle, the vehicle including a seat disposed on a floor of the vehicle and a recess formed downwardly in the floor immediately behind the seat, comprising,

a cross member fixed to a vehicle body at its opposite ends so as to extend across the width of the vehicle above the recess, and

a buckle connecting member connected with a buckle of a seat belt for the seat at one end and connected with said cross member at ~~the other~~ another end;

wherein the seat is selectively arranged into an upright position where a seat back of the seat is substantially upright near the rear edge of a seat cushion of the seat, or into a folded position where the seat back is forwardly folded down onto the seat cushion of the seat, and the seat cushion is mounted on the vehicle floor movably in at least one of the longitudinal direction and vertical direction of the vehicle following the selective arrangement operation of the seat back,

wherein said buckle connecting member is fixed to said cross member at a first fixing portion and fixed to the seat cushion at a second fixing portion between said first fixing portion and the buckle, and

the length between said first fixing portion and said second fixing portion is predetermined so as to allow said buckle connecting member to accommodate the motion of the seat cushion.

2. (Original) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 1,

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wherein the recess is provided for storing a spare tire, and said cross member is located so as to cause no interference with the spare tire during loading and unloading of the spare tire into and from the recess.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 3

1.

wherein a first guide mechanism is provided for guiding the motion of the seat cushion while maintaining a substantially constant distance between said first fixing portion and said second fixing portion during the motion of the seat cushion.

5. (Currently Amended) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 3

1.

wherein a depression is formed on an upper portion of the seat cushion for storing the buckle.

6. (Currently Amended) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 3

1.

wherein said cross member is concealed by the seat back from above when the seat back is in the folded position.

7. (Currently Amended) A seat belt system for a vehicle, comprising,

a cross member, fixed to a vehicle body at its opposite ends so as to extend across a width of the vehicle above a recess formed downwardly in a floor of the vehicle immediately behind at least one seat,

the seat including a seat back and a seat cushion, and being selectively arranged into an upright position where the seat back is substantially upright near the rear edge of the seat cushion, or into a folded position where the seat back is forwardly folded

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down onto the seat cushion,

a buckle connecting member connected with a buckle of a seat belt for the seat at one end and connected with said cross member at the other end, and

a box-like sub trunk removably provided behind the seat.

wherein the seat and the sub trunk are positioned so that a back surface of the seat back and an upper surface of the sub trunk substantially align with each other, and the recess is covered with the seat back at its front portion and covered with the sub trunk from above at its rear portion, with the seat back in the folded position, and

wherein said cross member is concealed by the seat back from above when the seat back is in the folded position.

8. (Currently Amended) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 3, the vehicle further comprising,

a box-like sub trunk removably provided behind the seat,

wherein the seat and the sub trunk are positioned so that a back surface of the seat back and an upper surface of the sub trunk substantially align with each other, and the recess is covered with the seat back at its front portion and covered with the sub trunk from above at its rear portion, with the seat back in the folded position.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Original) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 8,

wherein the sub trunk comprises a central section at the laterally central position and a pair of side sections on the right and left sides of the central section, respectively, with the side sections being permanently attached to the floor behind the seat, and the central section being removably attached to the floor behind the seat.

11. (Currently Amended) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 8

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10.

wherein an engagement structure is provided between the central section and the side sections so as to allow the central section to releaseably engage with the side sections.

12. (Original) The seat belt system for a vehicle as defined in claim 8,

wherein the floor includes a lower-situated front floor, a higher-situated rear floor continuing to the front floor, and a step raising the rear floor at the rear edge of the front floor by a predetermined height,

the seat is mounted on the rear floor,

the seat cushion comprises a seat cushion frame bending down towards its front edge and a cushion material covering at least over the cushion frame, and

a second guide mechanism is provided which downwardly displaces the seat cushion during the fold down operation of the seat back and guides the seat cushion so that the front edge of the seat cushion frame is located ahead of the step with the seat back in the folded position.

13. (Original) A seat belt system for a vehicle, comprising,

a cross member fixed to a vehicle body at its opposite ends so as to extend across the vehicle width above a recess formed downwardly in a vehicle floor immediately behind at least one seat,

the seat including a seat back and a seat cushion, and being selectively arranged into a upright position where the seat back is in substantially upright near the rear edge of the seat cushion, or into a folded position where the seat back is forwardly folded down onto the seat cushion,

a buckle connecting member connected with a buckle of a seat belt for the seat

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at one end and connected with said cross member at the other end, and

a box-like sub trunk removably provided behind the seat,

wherein the seat and the sub trunk are adapted so that a back surface of the seat back and an upper surface of the sub trunk substantially align with each other, and the recess is covered with the seat back from above at its front portion and covered with the sub trunk from above at its rear portion, with the seat back in the folded position.